

H O T F U N

I N T H E

S U M M E R T I M E

Those summer days are here again. After weeks inside,
let's try to make the most of them.



Courtesy of Sweet Liberty Catamaran

Cruise Naples' gorgeous Gulf waters aboard the Sweet Liberty catamaran.

Every year, millions flock to Southwest Florida to score some much-needed sun and take in the vast natural beauty of the Gulf. Things may be different this season, thanks to the coronavirus. But as the pandemic wanes and the long, slow months of summer roll around, we'll all be more than ready to explore—and, in some cases, rediscover—the world beyond the living rooms where we've all been sequestered for weeks. Now that it's time to safely get out, you'll no doubt want to hit the beach. But there's so much more to the region than its beautiful sand and surf. From nationally recognized art galleries and restaurants to a hidden wildlife sanctuary and luxury shopping, we've taken a close look at the endless activities the area has to offer. Of course, you should call ahead or check websites and Facebook pages to make sure the places you want to visit are open. The beach will still be there when you come back.

ELITE TREATS

EDGEWATER BEACH HOTEL REUNITE PACKAGE

Edgewater Beach Hotel has it all: gorgeous beachfront suites, a fitness center, indoor and outdoor dining, valet service and all the comforts one would expect from a prestigious resort. For those seeking to make up lost time with family, Edgewater has recently announced their new *Reunite* family reunion package. Between July 1, 2020, and Dec. 31, 2021, families can book their reservations at Edgewater for three nights' accommodations, a charter fishing trip, an extravagant dinner spread right on the sand and a beach brunch with a picnic basket and blanket monogrammed with the family surname. There's no better time to gather and embrace your loved ones—and, if we might add, no better place. *Address: 1901 GulfShore Blvd N., Naples. Website: edgewaternaples.com/*

JW MARRIOTT MARCO ISLAND SPA

The resort itself completed a \$320 million renovation project last year, updating the rooms, suites and grand entrance,

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and adding five new restaurants and a gaming emporium. What is already a luxurious stay on the Gulf is amplified by the in-house Spa by JW. The spa lets guests pamper themselves with treatments tailored to their needs and based on four principles: Calm, Indulge, Invigorate and Renew. Within each category is a menu offering tension-relieving massages, foot massages, anti-aging facials and a body scrub for 50- or 80-minute sessions. Express treatments are also available, relieving sore muscles and rejuvenating the body in less than half the time. *Address: 400 S Collier Blvd, Marco Island. Hours: Open daily from 7 a.m. to 6 p.m. Website: marriott.com/hotels/travel/mrkfl-jw-marriott-marco-island-beach-resort/*

SHANGRI-LA SPRINGS

The historic hotel and resort in Bonita Springs, popular for its lush grounds and ideal location along Oak Creek, has recently received some welcome changes. The guest rooms and meeting spaces were revamped last year. And an all-organic restaurant, Harvest & Wisdom, has opened on the property, sourcing produce from the grounds and meat from local farms. The on-site spa offers a sauna, steam room, massage treatments, body wraps and facials that'll have you walking out feeling radiant and rejuvenated. Consider a weekend stay here—you'd never have to leave. *Address: 27750 Old 41 Road, Bonita Springs. Website: shangrilasprings.com/*



The Edgewater Beach Hotel offers a family reunion package for a gathering you won't forget. Find your Zen with spa treatments and organic delicacies at Shangri-La Springs.

Courtesy of Edgewater Beach Hotel,
Brian Teitz



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You might spot the rare "super" ghost orchid this summer at Corkscrew Swamp Sanctuary.

EXPLORE

CLAM PASS

The only hard thing about going to the beach in Southwest Florida is choosing which section of sandy oasis you want to enjoy. Out of dozens of beaches in the area, Clam Pass hits the mark every time. A boardwalk—which beachgoers can stroll or navigate via a free tram—winds from the parking lot through acres of mangrove habitat and spills visitors directly onto the beach. Near the drop-off are bike racks, foot showers, a life jacket station, restrooms and a concession stand that offers drinks and sandwiches. So leave the cooler and beach bag at home—all you need to do is show up. *Address: 465 Seagate Drive, Naples. Hours: Open daily from 8 a.m. to sunset. Website: colliercountyfl.gov/your-government/divisions-f-r/parks-and-recreation*

CORKSCREW SWAMP

The 2.5 miles of boardwalk that course through dense marsh and pine flatwoods make Corkscrew Swamp Sanctuary one of Southwest Florida's most impressive inland gems. Your great escape into the 13,000-acre wetlands will reveal a surprise around nearly every corner—often a barred owl nesting in the trees overhead or a group of alligators napping in the sun—within this sanctuary for native wildlife. The largest old growth bald cypress forest in North America can be found here, as well as the legendary endangered "super" ghost orchid, resting high in the cypress' limbs. And summer is just the right time to spot the elusive bloom—last year, the orchid's flowers first appeared in June. *During the safer-at-home order, Corkscrew Swamp had been constantly updating its Facebook page with informative posts, articles and photos of the sanctuary's diverse vegetation and wildlife. Address: 375 Sanctuary Road W., Naples. Hours: Open daily from 7 a.m. to 5:30 p.m. Website: corkscrew.audubon.org/*

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NGALA

This 42-acre wildlife sanctuary nestled deep in Golden Gate Estates is one of Naples' best-kept secrets. Those looking to get up close and personal with animals indigenous to continents like Africa and South America get the rare opportunity to do so through NGALA's exotic animal encounter. Professional animal handlers will guide you around the preserve and lead animated interactions with Walter, the white rhino, and Coulter, the giraffe, among others. Outside of tours, the property doubles as an event venue for all sorts of special occasions, with dining options

per Call of the Wild Catering Company. Elevate your summer night dinner party by transforming it into an exotic rendezvous that's sure to impress. *Address: 2755 Inez Road, Naples. Hours: By reservation only. Website: ngala.net/*

INDULGENCES

PERSONAL CHEF

Summer calls for small poolside dinner parties with friends that last long into the evenings. What could make that even better? Never having to lift a finger. Consider

hiring a personal chef to swoop in and craft a delicious spread for your group. Using seasonal ingredients, Naples private chef Sebastian Mazzotta, who worked as an executive chef for Chops City Grill and Aqua Grill in Naples, will create tasty hors d'oeuvres or full-course meals in your home. He offers complimentary consultations for hosts to customize their menu, and will prepare tables and provide china, linens and other elements of the evening's decor upon request. Wine pairings are also on the table, alongside your wagyu beef with truffle gouda and caviar,

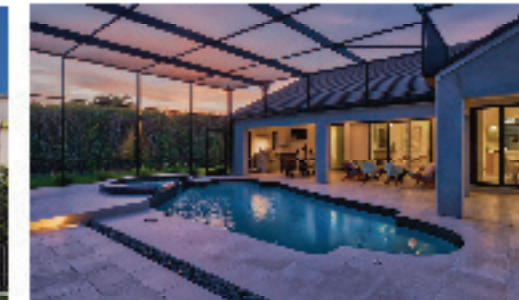


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Admire the works of accomplished American artists at Harmon-Meek Gallery, including this 2015 piece by Hunt Slonem, called *Catalaya X*.

or your warm oysters with brown butter, brioche and Champagne sabayon. Bon appetit. *Address: 4584 Enterprise Ave., Suites 4 & 5, Naples. Website: chefmazzotta.com/*

THIRD STREET SOUTH AND FIFTH AVENUE SOUTH

Any Southwest Florida-based travel guide will tout Third Street South and Fifth Avenue South in Naples as two must-see destinations, and *Gulfshore Life* is no exception to this rule. These thoroughfares mark where daily commutes grind to a halt and visitors are coaxed into taking life a little slower. Considered the main street of Naples, Fifth Avenue South is home to high-end specialty shops and boutiques, restaurants and art galleries, a theater and an inn, all behind Mediterranean-style facades. The street is lined with palms, and at night, soft string lights and live music make a visit here unforgettable. Third Street South is located in the heart of Naples' historic district, boasting a number of family-owned shops, art galleries and restaurants that are housed in some of the area's oldest buildings. With trunk shows and farmers markets located here year-round, just a block from the Gulf, you'll have no choice but to acknowledge that the travel guides were right. *Website: fifthavenuesouth.com/shop/thirdstreetsouth.com/*

CHOPS CITY GRILL (ON FIFTH)

It's hard to refuse a nice slab of steak at an affordable market price. Add a selection of more than 100 whiskeys and handcrafted cocktails to choose from, and Chops City Grill is impossible to pass up. The popular steak house received a \$1.5 million remodel last year to continue serving their loyal crowds with an upscale flair. The renovation saw an expanded wine and whiskey list, and an updated menu that includes classic steaks, imported Japanese wagyu, Nordic rosefish, Thai snapper and Faroe Island Salmon. The addition of

Courtesy of Harmon-Meek Gallery

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A stay on one of Tropicalboat Luxury Yacht Rentals' vessels offers a generous slice of the good life.

plush velvet booths and chandeliers give the interior a warm, romantic feel. New tables, chairs and kitchen equipment ensure that the food is just as good, while the experience is more luxurious than ever. Address: 837 Fifth Avenue S., Naples. Hours: 5 p.m. to 8:30 p.m., Sunday through Thursday; 5 p.m. to 9 p.m., Friday and Saturday. Website: chopscitygrill.com/

HARMON-MEEK GALLERY

Harmon-Meek's strict curating guidelines and stellar reputation as the oldest American art gallery in the Southeast have earned it some serious reverence among art collectors worldwide. Established in

1964 and operated by the Meek family since the 1970s, the gallery showcases hand-selected sculptures and paintings that enrich through the unique stories they tell. The Meek daughters, who are the owners and operators of the gallery, uphold the criteria that the artwork must have been created by established American artists and can only be exhibited if the artists have work in a permanent museum collection. Whether you're looking for inspiration, a little taste of culture or a stunning new conversation piece for your home, you're sure to find it here. While sheltering in place, Harmon-Meek Gallery had been keeping the community updated on

the season's art by sharing exhibitions and the owners' own private collections with the public on their Facebook page. Address: 599 9th Street N. #309, Naples. Hours: 10 a.m. to 5 p.m., Monday through Friday. Website: harmonmeekgallery.com/

DOC FORD'S RUM BAR & GRILLE

There's no shortage of bars and grills in Southwest Florida, but Doc Ford's is worth a special trip—even if it means taking the scenic causeway to Sanibel and Captiva Islands. The sports bar takes its name from the fictional marine biologist who has traversed numerous tropical settings in local author Randy Wayne

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White's popular mystery novels. A celebration of both local talent and the Gulfshore's coastline, each Doc Ford location offers a raw bar, gourmet finger food, popular bar eats and a full menu of seafood-based cuisine. *Address: Sanibel Island: 2500 Island Inn Road, Sanibel. Captiva Island: 5400 S Seas Plantation Road, Captiva. Fort Myers Beach: 708 Fishermans Wharf, Fort Myers Beach. Hours: All locations open daily from 11 a.m. to 10 p.m. Website: docfords.com/*

TRANSPORT YOURSELF

TESLA

Once you finish scouring the racks at Brooks Brothers and Ralph Lauren in the Waterside Shops, cruise around the plaza until you reach the Tesla store. The store offers test drives of their Model S, Model X and Model 3 (with appointments preferred), but store manager Austin Knight says that this year's excitement revolves around the new Model Y crossover SUV. The all-wheel drive electric vehicle can go from 0-60 mph in 3.5 seconds, has a touchscreen display, a long-range battery and seating for seven. Tesla at Waterside expects a floor model for test drives sometime this summer. And if you're still wondering about that new Tesla Roadster, you can reserve one online or in store for a total purchase price of \$250,000. *Address: 5415 Tamiami Trail N, H-2, Naples. Hours: 10 a.m. to 7 p.m., Monday through Saturday; 12 p.m. to 6 p.m., Sunday. Website: watersideshops.com/retailer/tesla/*



Reserve your spot in NGALA's exotic animal encounter for a little walk on the wild side. And stopping by Marissa Collections is a must while visiting Naples' Fifth Avenue South.

Getty, Anna Gunselman

INSTANT LUXURY AND EXOTIC CAR RENTALS

Florida's warm and sunny weather is conducive to cruising through the city with your windows down—or, how about in the luxury car of your dreams? Whether you're just visiting or living here year-round, it's time to treat yourself, and Instant Luxury and Exotic Car Rentals in Fort Myers is at your beck and call. Choose from the likes of a bright blue Lamborghini Huracan convertible, a Rolls Royce Ghost, or a Ferrari California

T convertible. Maybe a BMW 7 series is more your speed? And if you're itching to race, be sure to ask about their Track Experience Packages. *Address: 9160 Forum Corporate Parkway, Suite 350, Fort Myers. Hours: Open daily from 8 a.m. to 8 p.m. Website: instantluxuryrentals.com/*

NAPLES NANTUCKET YACHT GROUP

Naples Nantucket Yacht Group offers their luxury boutique yacht chartering service all over South Florida, the Bahamas and areas in the northeast. With a full

captain and crew to rely on, guests aboard any yacht in the fleet can shake off their stress and relax to the lulling Gulf waters. For bigger groups, consider boarding the 76-foot Lazarra. Available in Southwest Florida between August and May, and in the Keys June and July, this sleek vessel boasts four full guest staterooms, five bathrooms, a large sun deck, a salon and a dining area. The company also partners with local award-winning caterers who will indulge you with a beautiful presentation the moment you come aboard.



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Address: 1001 10th Ave S., Naples. Hours: Open daily from 8 a.m. to 9 p.m. Website: naplesnantuckyachtcharters.com/

TROPICALBOAT LUXURY YACHT RENTALS

If you want something more than the 76-foot Lazarra and don't mind embarking on a small trek to get it, Tropicalboat Luxury Yacht Rentals in Miami has a yacht guaranteed to make even the most jaded tycoon swoon. Their 228-foot Oceanfast has a master stateroom with a king bed, three guest staterooms and two guest cabins for comfortable sleeping quarters. Easily impress your guests with the vessel's cinema room, helipad, gym, pool with a swim-up bar, deck jacuzzies, two jet skis, wakeboard, paddleboards, canoes and a 600-bottle wine cellar. The Oceanfast cruises South Florida, the Bahamas, the Caribbean and Biscayne Bay, providing the escape of your daydreams. For a weekly rental price of \$420,000, this floating mansion is all yours. *Address: 1221 Brickell Ave, #900, Miami. Hours: Open daily from 9 a.m. to 6 p.m. Website: tropicalboat.com/*

SWEET LIBERTY CATAMARAN

If you're not a local, a cruise aboard the Sweet Liberty catamaran will make you fall in love with the area. And if you are a local ... well, then prepare to fall in love all over again. Tour groups will depart Naples City Dock on the 53-foot catamaran and coast down the Gordon River, past million-dollar mansions and beds of mangroves, out to the Gulf of Mexico. Passengers can opt for a romantic sunset cruise or take a jaunt out during the after-



Fine tune your pickleball technique at East Naples Community Park, or with a lesson from pickleball great Simone Jardim. Then test drive a Tesla at the marque's signature store at Naples' Waterside Shops.

Michael Gauthier, Getty

gulfshorelife.com

noon to see more of the local landscape. The shelling cruise will shuttle you out to Keewaydin Island, where you can roam the remote beach for an hour and collect a vibrant assortment of unique shells to take home. *Address: 880 12th Ave S., Naples. Hours: Open daily from 9 a.m. to 7 p.m. Website: sweetliberty.com/*

JUST FOR FUN

PICKLEBALL

Any admirer of pickleball is well aware that Naples is the hub for the Minto

U.S. Open Pickleball Championships every April. Although the tournament was cancelled this year, the game still goes on. In summer—when many international and northern visitors have returned home—the courts are a bit more accessible. That includes the 64 courts in East Naples Community Park, where the championships are held. Those looking to hone their skills can drop in at the park for free, or train with professional pickleball player Simone Jardim, who began her own pickleball training company, Peak Performance Pickleball Academy,

in Bonita Springs. But she's no ordinary coach—Jardim has won every women's singles pro title in the U.S. Open since 2016. Need we say more? *Address: East Naples Community Park: 3500 Thomasson Drive. Naples Peak Performance Pickleball Academy: 27200 Kent Road, Bonita Springs. Hours: Open daily from 8 a.m. to 10 p.m. For lessons, 8 a.m. to 2 p.m., Monday, Wednesday and Friday; 11:30 a.m. to 2:30 p.m., Tuesday and Thursday. Website: colliercountyfl.gov/your-government/divisions-f-r/parks-and-recreation. peakpickleballacademy.com/*

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